

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.111
Attorney Docket No. 053168
Application No. 10/550,627

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-8 are herein amended. No new matter has been presented.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-8 were objected to because of informalities. Claims 1-8 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

Withdrawal of the claim objections is requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Office Action states that the phrase "such as moisture in the compressed air" is indefinite. Claim 2 has been amended for clarification.

Withdrawal of the § 112 rejection is requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

A. Rejection based on Karwat

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by **Karwat** (US 2,699,047). Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that Karwat does not teach or suggest:

wherein the air compression means, the oxygen concentrating means and the oxygen/air compression means are arranged in one line and a total amount of the compressed air compressed by the air compression means is supplied to the oxygen/air compression means

as recited in claim 1.

Karwat discloses dividing the air so that a “divided-off” portion of the air goes to compressor 40. (Col. 6, lines 58-67.) Since Karwat does not disclose feeding all of the air to compressor 40, Karwat does not disclose the “one line” arrangement as recited in claim 1 and thus, the total amount of the air through the air compression means is not supplied to the second compression means.

B. Rejection based on Guillard

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by **Guillard** (US 6,319,303). Favorable reconsideration is requested.

(1) Applicants respectfully submit that Guillard does not teach or suggest:

an oxygen concentrating means for concentrating oxygen gas that is contained in the air compressed by the air compression means

as recited in claim 1.

The Office Action cited adsorber 5B of Guillard as corresponding to an oxygen concentrating means as recited in claim 1. (Office Action, page 5.)

However, main adsorbers (5A, 5B) in Guillard are just for eliminating a first impurity of moisture (H₂O) and a second impurity of moisture (CO₂). (Col. 2, line 64 to col. 3, line 9.) On the contrary, concentration (partial pressure) of oxygen in compressed air is increased by adsorbing nitrogen of the compressed air in the first adsorption towers 2, 3 in the present invention. Furthermore, although Guillard describes that purification of air is increased by eliminating impurities of the air, there is no description about concentrating oxygen.

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(2) Applicants respectfully submit that Guillard does not teach or suggest:

wherein the oxygen concentrating means is an adsorption tower containing
an adsorbent for adsorbing nitrogen gas in the compressed air

as recited in claim 2.

The Office Action takes the position that adsorber 5B of Guillard is an adsorption tower containing an adsorbent for adsorbing nitrogen gas in the compressed air. (Office Action, page 5 citing Guillard, col. 2, line 65 to col. 3 line 12.) However, Guillard at col. 2, line 65 to col. 3, line 12 teaches that adsorber 5B is for adsorbing H₂O and CO₂. Guillard does not disclose that adsorber 5B is for adsorbing nitrogen and does not disclose that adsorber 5B has the capability of adsorbing nitrogen.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1 and 2 are patentable over the cited references, and claims 2-8 are patentable by virtue of their dependence from claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-8 is hereby solicited.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,
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